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FEDERATION OF NATIVE WELFARE SOCIETIES
IN SOUTHERN RHODESIA.

EMPLOYMENT OF AFRICAN ARTISANS.

This memorandum has been prepared in view of the opposition of the Industrial Council of the Building Industry to the resolution passed by the Council of the Federation of Native Welfare Societies on 5th February, 1944 :

"THAT LOCAL AUTHORITIES BE URGED TO EMPLOY AFRICAN ARTISANS IN THE ERECTION OF LOCATION BUILDINGS, THESE ARTISANS TO BE EMPLOYED BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITY AND WORK UNDERTAKEN DEPARTMENTALLY."

1. It is considered a right policy to employ Native artisans in the erection of accommodation in Locations and Native Areas, and this does not appear to be in conflict with the Government policy of "parallel" development.
2. It is considered that the employment of European artisans in the erection of location houses makes the cost of building high. Consequently the rentals to be economic must be correspondingly high and beyond the means of Native tenants in receipt of low rates of pay. The use of Native artisans definitely reduces building costs and thus makes it possible to charge lower rentals.
3. A substantial amount of good location housing has already been erected by Native artisans, under European Supervision, particularly in Bulawayo and Umtali locations. It would be a serious reflection on European artisans, with provision for apprenticeship and technical training, if the work done by Native artisans in the building trade was in every detail up to the standard of qualified and well trained European artisans. Industrial training given to Natives at recognised institutions covers a period of only two years, and there is obviously no scheme of apprenticeship. It is, however, stressed that many Native artisans have reached a high standard of work and in many instances this is equal to that of the European artisans engaged in location building.

In minor details the housing erected in Umtali and Bulawayo by Native artisans might not be of the highest possible standard, but it is maintained that the work is satisfactory and the housing is in every way suitable for Native occupation. Native housing erected in Bulawayo many years ago by Native artisans still stands in a satisfactory condition and compares very favourably with housing erected in Salisbury Location by Europeans about the same period.

Native artisans, under European supervision, are quite capable of erecting satisfactory housing which will stand 30 years, and this is deemed a sufficiently long period to anticipate the use of Native housing at present being erected. It is safe to assume that Native housing at present being

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erected in locations will be completely out-of-date in 30 years.

4. The operation of the Industrial Conciliation Act has almost completely eliminated the employment of skilled and semi-skilled Native artisans in those areas in which the Industrial Agreements of the Building Industry apply, namely, Salisbury, Bulawayo, Umtali, Gwelo, Que Que, Selukwe, Gatooma and Fort Victoria. The building of location housing appears to provide satisfactory scope for the employment of skilled and semi-skilled Native labour. As already indicated, these Native artisans should be employed under European supervision.

5. The Industrial Conciliation Act of the Union of South Africa gives power to the Minister to exclude Native Areas from the scope of Industrial Agreements. The definition of "Native Areas" includes Locations. There is no such provision in the S. Rhodesian Act.

6. Natives are excluded in the definition of "employees" in the S. Rhodesian Industrial Conciliation Act and, therefore, are not covered by the Industrial Agreements made under the Industrial Conciliation Act. Section 31 of the Act, however, makes provision for Natives to be brought within the scope of these industrial agreements by proclamation of the Governor. The terms of the particular industrial agreement are then binding on Natives engaged by any employer and upon every employer of such Natives in

(a) any municipality which is included in the area for which such agreement is operative and which is named in such proclamation; and

(b) any portion of that undertaking, industry, trade or occupation which is carried on by such employer beyond the limits of such municipality and is subsidiary to the undertaking, industry, trade or occupation carried on by him within the limits of such municipality.

"Municipality" includes

(i) the area within the limits of the township of any municipality constituted under the laws for the time being in force relating to municipalities; and

(ii) any portions of any municipal lands attached to such municipality, commonly known as the commonage, which are leased or sold as sites for industrial or commercial purposes;

but does not include any other portion of such commonage or any other area within such commonage which is not also within the limits of such township.

It would therefore appear that in Salisbury, where the Location has never been brought within the Municipal area, and also in other similar cases, there would be no infringement of the Industrial Conciliation Act by the employment of Native artisans on Location housing at rates of pay outside the terms of the industrial agreement of the Building Industry.

7. The National Industrial Council of the Building Industry has stated that it is not opposed to the employment of Native artisans, but to their employment at lower rates of pay than those laid down in industrial agreements. In answer to this, it is contended that the insistence on European rates of pay

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being made applicable to Native artisans in actual fact aims at the exclusion of Native artisans. There are serious reasons why Natives should not suddenly enter the category of employment for which 4.4¹/₂d. per hour, plus cost of living allowances, is paid. Such a rapid rise in wages without a corresponding improvement in the Natives sense of responsibility in spending money is likely to have disastrous results in their social life. It is maintained that satisfactory rates of pay should be allowed, but these should be a good deal lower than those operating in the case of Europeans employed in the Building Industry.

8. The National Industrial Council of the Building Industry contends that Natives in the Salisbury area are there in the sole interest of the European population. While it is admitted that the majority of adult male Natives residing in the Salisbury area are in the employment of Europeans, it should be recognised that there are a number of Natives residing in the location who follow independent occupations.

Natives are being brought into urban areas in increasing numbers by the claims of industry and commerce. It is contended that the Europeans concerned have a reciprocal duty to give attention to the human interests of the Natives in respect of housing, living conditions, wages and feeding.

A further contention of the National Industrial Council of the Building Industry is that in the same way as other requirements of the Natives have to be provided at costs prevailing in the European area, so should their housing be provided. It is felt that this contention is fallacious. The requirements of Natives in urban areas are specially catered for by Native stores, eating houses, etc., where different standards of requirements are accepted, corresponding to some degree to the lower rates of pay received by Natives.

9. On the question of the supply of Native artisans, there is available in various parts of the Colony a substantial number of Native artisans. If it were known that in building activities there was a satisfactory scope for employment, an increasing number of Natives would undergo the necessary training. Many Native tradesmen are in business on their own account. The Chief Native Commissioner in his report for 1943 gives the following statistics of Natives following independent vocations:

Builders	...	...	575.
Carpenters	...	...	378.
Mason Plasterers	...	...	30.
Painters	...	...	173.

Once Natives are satisfied that there is scope for suitable employment in urban locations, it is anticipated that the supply will soon approximate to the demand. It will be appreciated that in the initial stages considerable and continuous supervision by qualified Europeans will be necessary, and it would be unwise to judge the success of employing Native artisans after only a limited experience over a short period.

10. The Howman Committee very strongly recommended the use of Native artisans in the erection of Location buildings. Mr. F. Walton Jamieson of the Central Housing Board of the Union recently stated publicly in Bulawayo that he was strongly in favour of the use of Native artisans in the erection of Location accommodation. The following is an

extract from the Smit Report (Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Social, Health and Economic Conditions of Urban Natives in the Union):-

" The Committee feels that housing for Natives in a Native area is emphatically a sphere in which the Native tradesman, whether mason, bricklayer, plasterer, carpenter or plumber, should be encouraged to do all the work of which he is capable. We believe that the supply would rapidly respond to the demand, and that a great sense of injustice would be removed.

Section Fifty-one of the Industrial Conciliation Act, No.36 of 1937, contains special provision for excluding an urban Native location or any class of work in such a location from the scope of an industrial agreement or award.

It is suggested that, to begin with, work of a fairly straightforward type should be undertaken departmentally by the local authority and that the Native workmen should be carefully supervised and instructed where necessary by an experienced European foreman, until thoroughly acquainted with requirements.

In order to secure a two-fold benefit of -

- (a) skilled employment for Native workmen; and
- (b) cheaper houses at a lower rent,

it will be necessary for wages to be materially below the European level - sufficiently lower that not only is the loss in time made good, but the total cost of the work is actually less. "

11. The Federation of Native Welfare Societies would be willing to appoint representatives to meet the National Industrial Council of the Building Industry. It is suggested that such a meeting should be attended by representatives of the Salisbury City Council and possibly other local authorities.

It is further suggested that a representative deputation be appointed to examine the housing at present being erected by Native artisans in the Bulawayo Location.

July 1944.

FEDERATION OF NATIVE WELFARE SOCIETIES

IN SOUTHERN RHODESIA.

EMPLOYMENT OF AFRICAN ARTISANS IN THE BUILDING OF
LOCATION ACCOMMODATION.

The following are copies of correspondence between the Salisbury City Council and the Federation, and are circulated for the information of delegates to the Council Meeting on June 24th, 1944 :-

LETTER RECEIVED FROM THE TOWN CLERK, SALISBURY, DATED 11/5/44 :-

" Construction of houses for Natives by
Native Artisans.

I beg to inform you the City Council has received a letter from the Industrial Council of the Building Industry of Southern Rhodesia registering its opposition to the suggestion emanating from your Federation and other sources, that buildings to house Natives within the Salisbury area should be erected by skilled Native labour. To enable consideration to be given to this letter I have been directed to request your Federation to furnish me with details of the reasons for the adoption of the resolution set out in your circular letter to local authorities dated 24th March, 1944, i.e.:-

'That local authorities be urged to employ African artisans in the erection of Location buildings. These artisans to be employed by the local authority and work undertaken departmentally. '

I have also been directed to request you to furnish details of the policy adopted by other Municipalities in the Colony. "

LETTER FROM THE ORGANISING SECRETARY OF THE FEDERATION TO THE
TOWN CLERK, SALISBURY, DATED THE 25TH MAY, 1944:

" Re: Construction of Houses for Natives
by Native Artisans.

I acknowledge with thanks your letter 12/7 dated the 11th instant, and regret to learn that the Industrial Council of the Building Industry is opposed to the proposal made by the Federation and others covering the employment of Native artisans.

The Council of the Federation meets in Que Que on June 24th, and if desired, a full statement could be approved for submission to your Council. Perhaps a brief statement of the reasons behind the resolution submitted by the Federation would suffice. The Federation has from time to time discussed the question of the employment of Native artisans in the erection of Location housing, and the resolution submitted on this matter is supported by the following points:-

/(a) It.....

- (a) It is considered a right policy to employ Native artisans in the erection of accommodation in Locations and Native Areas.
- (b) The Industrial Conciliation Act has adversely affected the employment of skilled and semi-skilled Native artisans in European areas. The building of Location housing appears to provide satisfactory scope for the employment of skilled and semi-skilled Native labour.
- (c) The Industrial Conciliation Act of the Union of South Africa gives power to the Minister to exclude Native Areas from the scope of Industrial Agreements. The definition of "Native Area" includes Locations. There is no such provision in the Rhodesian Act.
- (d) It is considered that the employment of Europeans at high rates of pay for the erection of Location houses rented by Natives in receipt of low rates of pay makes impossible the payment of an economic rental. The use of Native artisans definitely reduces building costs. This has been clearly demonstrated in the Bulawayo and Umtali Location Housing Schemes.
- (e) A substantial amount of good Location housing has already been erected by Native artisans under European supervision, particularly in the Bulawayo and Umtali Locations.

The Federation is not at the moment in favour of the employment of Native building contractors, but holds the view that Native artisans should be employed by the local authority and the work undertaken departmentally under qualified European supervision. This is the method adopted in Bulawayo and Umtali and is very successful. A visit to either of these Locations would demonstrate that very satisfactory work has been done by Native artisans under European supervision. In Gatooma and Selukwe Native building contractors have undertaken the building of Location houses, and on the whole this has proved fairly satisfactory. In Gwelo and Salisbury European labour has been used, and in consequence building costs are high.

I think it is advisable to state that the Howman Committee very strongly recommended the use of African artisans in the erection of Location buildings. Mr. F. Walton Jamieson of the Central Housing Board of the Union recently stated publicly in Bulawayo that he was strongly in favour of the use of Native artisans in the erection of Location accommodation. The following is an extract from the Smit Report (Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Social, Health and Economic Conditions of Urban Natives in the Union):-

' The Committee feels that housing for Natives in a Native area is emphatically a sphere in which the Native tradesman, whether mason, bricklayer, plasterer, carpenter or plumber, should be encouraged to do all the work of which he is capable. We believe that the supply would rapidly respond to the demand, and that a great sense of injustice would be removed.

/'Section.....

' Section Fifty-one of the Industrial Conciliation Act, No. 36 of 1937, contains special provision for excluding an urban Native location or any class of work in such a location from the scope of an industrial agreement or award.

It is suggested that, to begin with, work of a fairly straightforward type should be undertaken departmentally by the local authority and that the Native workmen should be carefully supervised and instructed where necessary by an experienced European foreman, until thoroughly acquainted with requirements.

In order to secure a two-fold benefit of -

- (a) skilled employment for Native workmen; and
- (b) cheaper houses at a lower rent,

it will be necessary for wages to be materially below the European level - sufficiently lower that not only is the loss in time made good, but the total cost of the work is actually less. '

I hope the information contained in this letter will be of value, and if a full and more detailed statement is required, this could be submitted by my Council which meets on June 24th, 1944.

If it is so desired, I am confident the Federation would be willing to appoint a deputation to give evidence before your Council. "

LETTER RECEIVED FROM THE TOWN CLERK, SALISBURY, DATED THE 3RD JUNE, 1944:

" Construction of Houses for Natives by Native Artisans.

I am in receipt of your letter of the 25th ultimo, and accept with thanks the offer contained in the second paragraph thereof that your Federation submits to the City Council a full statement of its case in support of the principle of constructing houses for Natives by Native artisans.

It would be appreciated, however, if in addition to the points already commented on in your letter under reply, you would give consideration to the following additional matters:-

- (1) Paragraph (c) of your letter: Section 31 of the Industrial Conciliation Act (Chap.233) makes provision for industrial agreements being made binding on Natives (so far as the Salisbury area is concerned, see G.N.356 of 1942, and Proclamation No.20 of 1942) engaged by any employer and upon every employer of such Natives in -

- (a) any Municipality which is included in the area for which such agreement is operative

/and

" and which is named in such Proclamation.

(b)

Sub-section 4 of Section 31 reads :-

'For the purposes of this Section, "Municipality" includes -

- (a) the area within the limits of the township of any Municipality constituted under the laws for the time being in force relating to Municipalities;
- (b) any portions of any municipal lands attached to such Municipality, commonly known as the commonage, which are leased or sold as sites for industrial or commercial purposes.'

The Salisbury Native Location has never been brought within the Municipal boundaries and it would therefore seem that so far as Salisbury is concerned, the Council would not be infringing any part of the Industrial Conciliation Act by the employment of Natives on building construction at the Native Location.

- (2) The objection of the National Industrial Council of the Building Industry is not to the use of skilled Native labour, but to its use at rates of pay and conditions other than those laid down in G.N.356/1942 and Proclamation 20 of 1942.
 - (3) The National Industrial Council of the Building Industry contends that Natives in the Salisbury area are there only in the sole interest of the European population. In the same way that the other requirements of the Natives have to be provided at costs prevailing in the European area, so should their housing be provided.
 - (4) Is your Federation satisfied that the Native quarters which have been erected at Bulawayo and Untali by Native artisans are as well built as those erected, say, at Salisbury by European artisans?
 - (5) If the Salisbury Council and other Municipalities adopted the policy advocated by your Federation, is the supply of Native artisans adequate for the demand thus created? If not sufficient at present, when would the supply equal the demand?
 - (6) Would your Federation appoint representatives at this stage to discuss the whole question with representatives of the National Industrial Council of the Building Industry should such a course be decided upon? "
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